

## Exhibit 1

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# Colorado wildfires: Polis activates National Guard, all of Meeker on pre-evacuation status

Fires near Rio Blanco County town have scorched roughly 60,000 acres combined



The Lee fire burns southwest of Meeker in Rio Blanco County on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025. (Photo courtesy of Four Mile Fire Protection District)

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Two uncontained Colorado wildfires have charred thousands of acres and [spread within a mile of the Western Slope town of Meeker](#), forcing evacuations as the flames jump highways and threaten to cross the White River.

The lightning-sparked Lee and Elk fires are burning east and west of Meeker in Rio Blanco County, putting the entire town of around 2,400 people on pre-evacuation status as evacuation orders from both fires begin to merge.

Gov. Jared Polis mobilized the Colorado National Guard on Wednesday as extremely dry conditions and wind fueled growth on both fires.

The Lee and Elk fires had scorched 45,000 acres and 14,250 acres and are burning about 11 miles apart. Fire officials are not currently worried about the two fires merging, spokesperson Eric Coulter said Thursday.

The fires, which are burning in some of the driest conditions firefighters have ever seen, are "a very challenging situation," operations section chief Beau Kidd said at a community meeting in Meeker on Wednesday night.

"We anticipate rapid fire progression for the days to come under those red flag conditions," he said.

Polis [verbally issued a disaster declaration](#) on Sunday for the Elk fire. He [updated that declaration on Tuesday](#) to include the Lee fire.

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A West Metro Fire Rescue brush crew works with the Wyoming Hotshots to fight the 45,000-acre Lee fire burning near Meeker in Rio Blanco County. (Photo courtesy of West Metro Fire Rescue)

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## **The Lee and Elk fires near Meeker**

Twin wildfires burning east and west of Meeker have consumed more than 90 square miles since they were sparked by lightning Saturday afternoon, spurred by extremely dry conditions, wind and warm temperatures and forcing evacuations and closing highways near the town.

The 45,000-acre [Lee fire](#) is now the largest wildfire burning in Colorado. [The fire was only 700 acres on Sunday afternoon](#) and was mapped at 22,497 acres on Wednesday before doubling in size.

Roughly 11 miles east, the Elk fire grew roughly 6,000 acres on Wednesday, scorching a total of 14,250 acres with no containment, according to fire officials. Just days earlier, on Sunday, it had only burned 600 acres.

Meeker is about 70 miles northwest of Glenwood Springs and 40 miles north of Interstate 70.

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Fire conditions are made even more difficult because the Western Slope's typical late-summer monsoonal moisture never materialized, local and state officials said at a community meeting in Meeker on Wednesday night.

At one point this week, relative humidity near Meeker was just 2% – the lowest incident commander Casey Cheesebrough and many firefighters have ever seen.

Fire officials have certain "trigger points" that will cause them to reevaluate evacuating Meeker, including if the fire again crosses Colorado 13 from east to west, Cheesebrough said.

"If we get an ember across there it could be highly possible it could be established quickly. That's what we've seen the last couple of days," he said.



A horse grazes on a pasture as smoke billows from the Lee fire in Rio Blanco County just outside of Meeker on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025. (Photo by Andy Cross/The Denver Post)

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Locals can expect to see rapid fire growth and heavy smoke in the coming days, and fire crews are focused on protecting homes, structures and private property before they start working on building a perimeter. Firefighters are

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"I want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to protect the things that are important to you and get back to resuming your lives as normal as fast as possible," Kidd told Meeker residents Wednesday night.

If firefighters continue to make progress on the Elk fire, crews may be able to announce some containment this weekend or early next week, which would allow fire officials to move firefighters over to the Lee fire, he said.

Mandatory evacuation zones for both fires remained south of Meeker on Thursday, with rough borders of the White River to the north, three miles east of Buford along County Road 8 to the east, Fourmile Creek along Colorado 13 to the south and Piceance Creek to the west.

Areas that are under pre-evacuation and should be prepared to leave include most of the land adjacent to mandatory evacuation zones, including stretches of Colorado 64, the Flat Tops Trail Scenic Byway and the town of Meeker. [An updated evacuation map can be viewed online.](#)

Colorado 13 southwest of Meeker and Colorado 64 west of Meeker are closed in both directions for firefighting operations.



The Stoner Mesa fire in Dolores County evacuated part of the San Juan National Forest and had burned roughly 500 acres on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025. (Photo

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The lightning-sparked wildfire burning in a remote section of the San Juan National Forest grew to 833 acres and continued to cause evacuations in parts of the southwestern Colorado forest, [fire officials said](#).

The uncontained [Stoner Mesa fire](#) is burning about 20 miles northeast of Dolores in an "extremely difficult-to-access area" of the national forest. The closest town is Rico, 8 miles to the east with around 300 people.

Weather conditions will allow for large fire growth in the coming days, and fire crews are planning to focus on protecting homes and structures along Dolores County Road 38.

The west side of the fire is spreading into a previous burn scar from a wildfire roughly 20 years ago, Operations Section Chief Nate Christiansen said in an [afternoon briefing](#).

Dolores County officials issued evacuation orders for parts of the forest on Stoner and Taylor Mesa, including:

- Stoner Mesa Road, also known as Forest Service Road 686.
- Taylor Mesa Road, also known as Forest Service Road 545.
- All roads branching off the two Forest Service Roads.
- Mavreeso Campground.
- Burro Bridge Campground.
- West Dolores Campground.

"Due to extreme fire behavior and dangerous conditions on the ground, fire managers are developing an indirect suppression strategy," officials said in a [Thursday update](#).

That includes using roadways, natural features and machinery to establish control lines to stop the fire's spread before the flames arrive in that area.

Air tankers are no longer dropping retardant on the flames Thursday, fire officials said.

It wasn't effective in stopping the flames because of the heavy, dry fuel in the area, and there's "significant competition" for the tankers to help with other fires in the region, officials said.

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The Twelve fire, which sparked on Wednesday, Aug. 6, near Elk Springs in Moffat County, had burned at least 1,000 acres as of Wednesday evening. (Courtesy of Moffat County Sheriff's Office)

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## **The Twelve fire in Moffat County**

A fourth wildfire is burning near Elk Springs in Moffat County, about 50 miles west of Craig, sheriff's officials said Wednesday.

The Twelve fire sparked at about 3 p.m. Wednesday and grew to 1,000 acres in less than five hours. Fire officials estimate it is burning on 4,287 acres as of Thursday afternoon.

No homes have been lost, but sheriff's officials said two outbuildings were destroyed Wednesday night. There is no containment on the fire.

U.S. 40 was temporarily closed between Blue Mountain and Lowell Street in Maybell for the fire, but the highway reopened early Thursday morning, [Moffat County sheriff's officials said](#). Deer Lodge Road remains closed.

The cause of the wildfire remains under investigation.

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A helicopter drops water on the Windy Gap fire in Grand County on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the Grand County Sheriff's Office)

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## Windy Gap fire in Grand County

Grand County officials declared a local disaster emergency for a wildfire burning near Granby that has destroyed five cabins.

"There is imminent threat that Grand County could suffer from widespread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property resulting from the Windy Gap fire," a [resolution](#) passed Thursday by the [Grand County Board of Commissioners](#) stated.

The cost and magnitude of responding to and recovering from the fire "is far in excess" of the county's available resources, according to the resolution.

As of Thursday morning, the fire had burned roughly 30 acres with 40% containment, [emergency management officials said](#).

An area between Lake Granby and Hot Sulfur Springs northwest of Granby is on pre-evacuation status, [according to a county evacuation map](#).

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The Twelve fire burns near Elk Springs in Moffat County, about 50 miles west of Craig, on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025. (Photo courtesy of the Moffat County Sheriff's Office)

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## Wildfire smoke causes statewide impacts

An [air quality advisory](#) is in effect for Moffat, Routt, Grand, Rio Blanco, Jackson and Dolores counties as four active wildfires burning on nearly 65,000 acres send smoke across the state.

The advisory was issued at 8:07 a.m. Thursday and will remain active through at least 9 a.m. Friday.

Residents should remain indoors when possible, according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

"If visibility is less than 5 miles in smoke in your neighborhood, smoke has reached levels that are unhealthy," state health officials said in the advisory.

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